

**RODERICK R. LEON GUERRERO
HAGATNA, GUAM**

I have quietly listened to the ongoing controversy over my relief as Adjutant General for the Guam National Guard (GUNG). I've wrestled with how and if I should respond. I have determined there is a need to respond to defend the good Soldiers, Airmen, and Civilian Employees of our GUNG because of the weak response by the GUNG when asked for comments by the media about the transition report. My response is based on my memory, I do not have access to reports, but can be validated by the GUNG, and does not cover all concerned areas identified in the transition report.

My primary concern is the accuracy and the generalization of the transition report leaked to the media. The unintended consequences of a potentially inaccurate transition report combined with the press coverage and negative public perception of the GUNG may have an impact on the morale of the hardworking and dedicated Soldiers, Airmen, and Civilian employees of the GUNG.

I question how the transition report can measure sexual assault/sexual harassment (SA/SH), low morale, fraternization, inequalities in promotion, an untenable ratio of men to women in leadership and command positions in the Guam Guard. The transition committee could have used federally produced reports to help with their assessment. I suspect that someone or a members from the Leon Guerrero-Tenorio Transition Team interviewed service members of the GUNG. Civilians of a political team interviewing U.S. service members is not appropriate. There are protocols in place to obtain information from service members.

If individuals were interviewed, what system was used to select the individuals interviewed? Did the transition committee get an adequate sample of Soldiers and Airmen? Did the committee take a sampling from various ranks? If there was no effort to be objective by obtaining an appropriate sample or to develop some sort of selection criteria in selecting individuals i.e. getting Soldiers and Airmen from the various ranks and various units, the transition report is inherently flawed.

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I take matters of sexual assault and sexual harassment (SA/SH) very seriously. A few years ago, I created a Sexual Assault Review Board (SARB). The board has matured into what is now called the Case Management Group for Sexual Assault (CMG-SA). This group is comprised of counselors, lawyers, equal opportunity personnel, Victim Advocates (VA), Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC) and behavioral health personnel who meet monthly. The board reviews all SA/SH cases to ensure victims are receiving the proper treatment and perpetrators are given due process and ensure they are properly disciplined. All reported SA/SH cases are reported at the National level. Additionally, the CMG-SA ensures all Soldiers and Airmen receive proper training to prevent SA/SH by reviewing the number of Soldiers and Airmen trained annually and placing emphasis if a unit is not complying with the requirements. The board also ensures each unit in the Guam Army and Air Guard has a properly trained SARC and a VA to aide anyone wanting to report sexual assault or harassment. If Soldiers or Airmen are reluctant to report SA/SH locally, they can go online and report at the National level and the case is tracked at the National level. An indicator of the effectiveness of the CMG-SA is the number of complaints received or under review. At one point in time, the group was reviewing several cases and is down to one case. In the last 2 years there has been no reported case of sexual assault and 1 reported cases of sexual harassment. The statistics regarding SA/SH can be obtained from federal reports. If the transition committee asked me about SA/SH, I would have referred them to the GUNG SARC, VA or the EO Officer.

With regard to low morale, anyone can say morale is bad. Providing a transition committee report and generalizing low morale and leaking the report to the media is irresponsible and injures the good reputation and morale of the hardworking Soldiers, Airmen, and Civilians of the GUNG. I am not sure what indicator was used to determine that morale was bad in the GUNG. Some indicators of poor morale is the number of Soldiers/Airmen retained over time, a broadly demonstrated lack of enthusiasm, general poor performance and a significant lack of commitment by members.

When the Guam Army and Air National Guard reports best retention of the 54 Guard units, or best manning and effective manning, that demonstrates that Soldier and Airman morale is good because they are reflecting a desire to stay in the organization. If morale was bad, Soldiers and Airmen would leave the organization in significant numbers. As mentioned, performance is also a measure of morale. The GUNG is very competitive with the other 54 States and Territories with National Guard units; the GUNG is a high performing organization as measured in the numerous passed inspections with high marks. Again the transition committee didn't ask for copies of these inspection results.

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Another way of measuring morale is through command climate surveys. The GUNG Command climate surveys indicate we have some issues. But what organization doesn't? After reviewing years of command climate surveys, I would argue they are effective. As an example, Governor Leon Guerrero can review LTC Aguigui's command climate survey when she was the Commander of Recruiting and Retention Command and the change of climate after she left command. I am confident that the transition report of low morale is not consistent with GUNGs command climate surveys nor is it a reflection of the professionalism of the organization and leaders of all levels.

The GUNG is the best Guard of the 54 States and Territories. Governor Leon Guerrero has publicly stated. Being the best Guard unit is an indicator of good moral and being the best doesn't happen over several days.

With regard to fraternization, I don't tolerate fraternization in the GUNG. All reported fraternization charges were investigated when I was the TAG. To ensure the investigation is unbiased and thorough, we went as far as bringing in investigators from off island to conduct investigations. All Individuals with substantiated cases were properly disciplined.

As for inequities in promotion, there are Army and Air Force regulations and National Guard regulations regarding promotion requirements, process and procedures. Anyone having a concern or complaint regarding inequalities in promotion can file an IG complaint through the federal process. During my tenure as the TAG, there has been no substantiated cases of inequities in promotion.

The GUNG in comparison to other Guard units is a young organization, the GUNG turns 38 years old this July. With the Infantry Battalion being the largest unit, females historically had limited opportunities to join the GUNG and move up the ranks. Just recently females were allowed to join in the infantry units. Last year, Alpha Company of the 1st Battalion 294th Infantry Regiment was one of 4 infantry units across 54 States and Territories that was certified to recruit females into a formerly combat restricted unit. Females being allowed in the infantry, gives them more opportunities, and I'm confident you will see more females move up the ranks.

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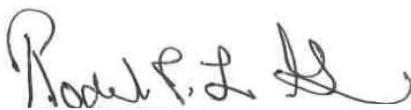
Additionally, during my time as the TAG, more females were in command leadership positions than any other time in the history of the Guam Guard. At one point in time, you had a female Captain commanding Hotel Company, a female Major commanding Medical Command, a female Major commanding the Guam Army National Guard Headquarters Element, a female Captain commanding a Headquarters Infantry Unit, a female Lieutenant Colonel Commanding the Regional Training Institute and a female Major Commanding a Comptroller Flight Squadron. This is consistent with the ratio of female to male officer population.

Since Governor Leon Guerrero replaced me, I have not made any effort to challenge her decision nor am I involved in any movement to question Lieutenant Colonel Aguigui's qualifications. Governor Leon Guerrero has the authority and responsibility to select the Adjutant General who she trusts and will work well with her vision and administration to grow the GUNG.

To the Soldiers, Airmen civilians, and families of the GUNG. I ask that you try not to get wrapped up at what's going with the press coverage regarding the GUNG. Please continue your great work to grow our National Guard. I ask that you remain strong and work with the new Adjutant General.

Thank you to all Soldiers, Airmen, veterans, retirees and civilians for all the messages and calls. They have helped my family and I during what should have been my most proudest moment.

To the Governor, I know I did not meet your expectations of a political appointee, it's because my duties and responsibilities as a military leader are of greater weight. The media focusing on inaccurate information provided by a potentially flawed transition report criticizes not only me, the report criticizes every leader at all levels in the Guam Guard. The collateral damage or the second and third order of effect of this may impact the morale and performance of our Soldiers, Airmen, civilians and their families. I sincerely wish you all the best as our Governor and success in your vision to make our island of Guam a better place to live.



Roderick R. Leon Guerrero